

Message Text

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PAGE 01 MANAMA 01166 230645Z
ACTION NEA-11

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION

1. SENATE VOTE ALLOWING CARTER ADMINISTRATION TO PROVIDE
MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA DREW MIXED
COMMENTS IN LOCAL PRESS. SOME FELT ACTION WAS MERELY A
SOP TO ARAB STATES, WHILE ONE NORMALLY
CRITICAL EDITOR PRAISED ADMINISTRATION'S EFFORTS ON BEHALF
OF ARAB STATES.

2. MUSTAFA AL QASAB, EDITOR OF WEEKLY AL MAWAKIF, CALLED
THE SENATE ACTION "... A GREAT SURPRISE ... WHICH PLEASES
THE ARAB STATES BECAUSE THEY REALIZE HOW HARD IT IS TO
CONFRONT THE ZIONIST LOBBY ... IT (THE SENATE DECISION)
RESULTED FROM THE AMERICAN PRESIDENT'S RESPECT FOR THE ARABS
AND HIS DETERMINATION TO FIND A JUST PEACE IN THE
MIDDLE EAST".

3. IN CONTRAST, MOHAMMAD AL SHIRAWI, WEEKLY AL ADWHAA
EDITOR AND PARTICIPANT IN RECENT ARAB JOURNALISTS TOUR,
DESCRIBED SENATE ACTION AS "STANDARD AMERICAN GAME" WITH
THE ARABS. HE WROTE, "THE JET FIGHTERS ARE NOT ONLY FOR
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EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA, BUT ALSO (IN FAR LARGER NUMBERS)
FOR ISRAEL. THE F-5S FOR EGYPT ARE SO OLD THAT THEY
SHOULD BE ON DISPLAY AT THE SMITHSONIAN AND THE SAUDI VERSION
OF THE F-15 IS NOT AS GOOD AS THE ISRAELI MODEL ... ISRAEL
WILL ALSO RECEIVE THE F-16 WHICH IS THE MOST DEVELOPED
FIGHTER".

4. WRITING IN DAILY AKHBAR AL KHALEEJ, EDITOR AHMED GHANI SAYS, "THE APPROVAL OF THE JET FIGHTER SALE TO EGYPT AND SAUDI ARABIA CONFIRMS THAT ZIONIST INFLUENCE IN THE US IS WEAKER THAN THEY (THE ZIONISTS) BELIEVED. THE ZIONISTS CANNOT STAND UP TO THE AMERICAN EXECUTIVE WHEN HE WANTS TO CHANGE A POLICY. NOW IT IS UP TO WASHINGTON TO IMPOSE A JUST PEACE IN THE MIDDLE EAST. IT WOULD BE A MISTAKE IF WASHINGTON THINKS THE SALE OF THE FIGHTERS HAS DISCHARGED ITS RESPONSIBILITIES TO THE ARABS."

5. ENGLISH DAILY NEWS HAD CONFLICTING EDITORIALS ON THE SENATE DECISION. ON MAY 17 IT CALLED SENATE ACTION "AN HISTORIC DECISION ... WHEN IT RENOUNCED ISRAEL'S WHINING AND AGREED TO SELL SAUDI ARABIA AND EGYPT SUBSTANTIAL ARMS IN THE SHAPE OF THE MOST MODERN FIGHTER JETS ... MAYBE NOW ISRAELIS WHO ARE CALLING FOR A PEACEFUL SETTLEMENT WILL HELP SWAY THE GOVERNMENT TO RID ITSELF OF BEGIN AND START LOOKING FOR A FORMULA THAT WILL HELP JEWS AND ARABS REGAIN THE COMPANIONSHIP THEY HAVE HELD FOR A THOUSAND YEARS". HOWEVER, ON MAY 21, THE DAILY NEWS REVISED ITSELF AND CALLED SENATE ACTION "THE GREATS ARMS CON." IT CONTINUED " ... THE DEAL WAS DESIGNED TO THROW DUST IN THE ARABS EYES ... THE PLANE DEAL IS AN AMERICAN GAME MEANT TO DIVERT THE ARABS ATTENTION FROM THEIR REAL CAUSE."

6. TURNING TO THE GREATER ISSUE OF MIDDLE EAST
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DEVELOPMENTS, MAWAKIF COLUMNIST AHMED TALAAT URGED ARAB STATES TO GIVE SADAT INITIATIVE A FULL YEAR TO PRODUCE RESULTS. HE ALSO ACCUSED PLO OF OBSTRUCTING PEACE BY REFUSING TO COOPERATE IN ANY WAY. HE CONCLUDES A LONG MEANDERING PIECE BY SAYING THAT THE EUROPEAN COMMON MARKET NATIONS ARE THE TRUE FRIENDS OF THE ARABS, NOT THE RUSSIANS OR THE AMERICANS.
TAYLOR

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